United Nations A/55/PV.9

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

9th plenary meeting
Monday, 11 September 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

The President: Twice already, I have urged delegations to be in the General Assembly Hall on time, and I do so once more.

But owing to the absence of a quorum, I am obliged now to suspend the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.20 a.m.

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: first report of the General Committee (A/55/250)

The President: The Assembly will now consider the first report of the General Committee, which has been circulated in document A/55/250. I shall refer to specific sections and paragraphs of the report which contain recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.

In paragraph 2 of its report, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to the provisions reproduced in annexes V, VI, VII and VIII to the Assembly's rules of procedure.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of those provisions?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 3 of its report, the General Committee took note of annex I — entitled "Guidelines on the rationalization of the agenda of the General Assembly" — to General Assembly resolution 48/264 of 29 July 1994, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly"; of the annex to General Assembly resolution 51/241 of 31 July 1997, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system"; and of paragraph 1 of resolution 52/163 of 15 December 1997, entitled "Amendment to rule 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly". The provisions of the resolutions are reflected in the document before the General Assembly under the relevant sections.

In paragraph 4 of its report, the General Committee took note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 48/264 (A/52/856) and 51/241 (A/52/855).

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 4 of the report?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now examine section II of the report, which deals with the organization of the session.

We turn first to section II.B, which deals with the rationalization of the work of the General Assembly.

In paragraph 7 of its report, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 5 of the annex to resolution 45/45, recommending that certain Main Committees should meet in sequential order.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 7 of the report?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 8, the General Committee draws the attention of the Assembly to paragraphs 30, 31 and 36 of the annex to resolution 51/241, providing that the Main Committees should hold organizational meetings before the commencement of the general debate and should meet in substantive session only after the end of the general debate; and that the First and Fourth Committees should meet, to the extent feasible, in a sequential manner.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 8?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 9, the General Committee took note of paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 52/163, which amends the first sentence of rule 103 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly to read as follows:

> "Each Main Committee shall elect a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur".

In paragraph 10, the General Committee took note of the fact that measures introduced to reduce costs relating to overtime would be strictly enforced.

We now turn to section II.C, on the closing date of the fifty-fifth session.

In paragraph 11, the General Committee recommends to the Assembly that the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly should recess no later than Tuesday, 5 December 2000.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 12, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that the closing date of the fifth-fifth session will be subject to a decision of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 12?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 13, the General Committee recommends to the Assembly that the First Committee should complete its work by Friday, 3 November; the Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth) Committee by Thursday, 9 November; the Third Committee by Friday, 10 November; the Sixth Committee by Tuesday, 21 November; and the Second and Fifth Committees by Friday, 1 December 2000.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to section II.D, concerning the schedule of meetings.

In paragraph 14, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that morning meetings should start at 10 a.m. promptly for all plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to remind members that, for the afternoon meetings, I intend to begin promptly at 3 p.m.

In the same paragraph, the General Committee recommends to the Assembly that, as a cost-saving measure, plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees, including informals, be adjourned by 6 p.m. and that no meetings be held on weekends, with the exception of the general debate. The Committee further recommends that this cost-saving measure should also apply, for the remainder of 2000, to meetings on the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 15, the General Committee recommends that, in order to avoid the late start of meetings, the General Assembly should waive the requirement of the presence of at least one third of the members to declare a plenary meeting open and permit the debate to proceed, and of at least one quarter of the members to declare a meeting of a Main Committee open and permit the debate to proceed.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In that connection, I should like to endorse strongly the practical suggestion made at previous sessions, for each delegation to designate someone to be present at the scheduled time. I genuinely hope that all delegations will cooperate.

In paragraph 16, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that delegations should be reminded of the utmost importance of punctuality.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In that regard, I should like to impress upon members that a 10-minute delay of the start of every meeting at Headquarters would result in a waste of approximately $800,000 a year. I therefore sincerely hope that all delegations will make a special effort to cooperate in this regard, so that all meetings can start promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

In section II.E, concerning the general debate, the General Committee took note of the fact that the general debate would be held from Tuesday, 12 September, to Saturday, 16 September 2000, and from Monday, 18 September, to Friday, 22 September 2000.

In paragraph 18, the Committee draws the attention of the Assembly to paragraph 21 of the annex to resolution 51/241, where the Assembly indicated a voluntary guideline of up to 20 minutes for each statement in the general debate.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 18?

It was so decided.

The President: In that regard, I should like to remind delegations of the request by the Secretariat that speakers deliver their statements at a normal speed within the given time-frame at all times to allow for proper interpretation.

In paragraph 19, the General Committee endorsed the suggestion of the Secretary-General that the list of speakers in the general debate be closed on Thursday, 14 September, at 6 p.m.

In view of the very large number of speakers already inscribed on the list, I urge representatives to take the floor in the order in which they appear on the list of speakers in the general debate. Those who are unable to speak at the scheduled time will be put at the end of the list for that meeting.

In paragraph 20, the General Committee draws the Assembly's attention to a previous decision of the Assembly to strongly discourage the practice of expressing congratulations inside the General Assembly Hall after a speech has been delivered. The Committee recommends that this provision should also apply during the fifty-fifth session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Committee also recommends to the Assembly that, after delivering their statements, speakers in the general debate should leave the General Assembly Hall through room GA-200, located behind the podium, before returning to their seats.

May I take it that the Assembly also approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to section II.F. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the provisions concerning explanations of vote and right of reply contained in paragraph 21?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to limit points of order to five minutes, as recommended in paragraph 22?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 23, in connection with the length of statements, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 22 of the annex to resolution 51/241, which provides that outside the general debate, there shall be a 15-minute time limit in plenary meetings and in the Main Committees.

The President: In paragraph 24, the Committee draws the attention of the Assembly to paragraph 23 of the report of the Secretary-General on the

implementation of resolution 51/241 (A/52/855), which states that since in plenary meetings the length of statements in debates other than the general debate averages eight minutes, the General Assembly may wish to review the recommendation contained in paragraph 22 of the annex to resolution 51/241.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 24 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the provisions regarding the length of statements contained in paragraph 25?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.G deals with records of meetings.

In paragraph 26, the General Committee took note of the fact that verbatim records would be provided during the fifty-fifth session for the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and for the meetings of the First Committee, and that summary records would be provided for the meetings of the General Committee and the other Main Committees of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 26 concerning transcriptions of the debates of some of the meetings of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation also contained in paragraph 26 that the practice not to reproduce *in extenso* statements made in a Main Committee be maintained for the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.H concerns concluding statements in the General Assembly and the Main Committees.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of that section?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.I concerns resolutions.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraphs 28 to 31?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to section II.J, concerning documentation.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provision relating to reports of the Secretary-General or subsidiary organs contained in paragraph 32?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 33, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 6 of its resolution 48/264 and to paragraph 5 of Section C of resolution 54/248 of 23 December 1999, which emphasize that documentation be available in accordance with the six-week rule for the distribution of documents simultaneously in each of the six official languages of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 33?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 34, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 32 of the annex to resolution 51/241, appealing to all bodies to exercise restraint in making proposals containing requests for new reports and to biennialize and triennialize the presentation of reports.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of that paragraph?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.K refers to questions related to the programme budget.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraphs 35 to 37?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 38, which concerns subparagraph 13 (d) of decision 34/401, the General Committee draws the Assembly's attention to the observations of the Secretary-General regarding the fact that the preparation of a statement of programme

budget implications by the Secretary-General may take a few days. In addition, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee need adequate time to review the programme budget implications of a draft resolution before the draft resolution can be acted on by the Assembly.

The Secretary-General thus considers it desirable that Member States submit proposals sufficiently in advance to avoid the cancellation of meetings and the postponement of consideration of items.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the observations of the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 38?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 39, the General Committee, at the suggestion of the Secretary-General, also draws the attention of the General Assembly to section VI of its resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, on procedures for administrative and budgetary matters, and to resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997, by which the provisions of resolution 45/248 B were reaffirmed.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraph 39?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.L concerns observances and commemorative meetings.

We turn first to paragraph 40. The General Committee recommends that, with the exception of the anniversary of the United Nations, the General Assembly should adopt the suggested format for commemorative meetings, including limiting each statement to 15 minutes.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraph 40?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly also approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 41 regarding the scheduling of observances and commemorative meetings?

It was so decided.

The President: I now invite the General Assembly to turn to section II.M, which refers to special conferences.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendations referred to in paragraphs 42 and 43?

It was so decided.

The President: In section II.N, concerning meetings of subsidiary organs, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly, on the strict understanding that meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services, that the subsidiary organs referred to in paragraph 44 be authorized to meet during the main part of the fifty-fifth session.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to section III of the report of the General Committee, which contains observations on the organization of future sessions of the General Assembly. In paragraph 45, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 17 of the annex to resolution 51/241, which states, inter alia, that the

> "plenary meetings of the General Assembly shall be formally opened every year on the first Tuesday following 1 September".

In that connection, the Committee also draws the attention of the Assembly to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 51/241 (A/52/855), in particular to paragraphs 16 and 17, which highlight the subsequent action that needs to be taken and the difficulty that will be encountered in implementing that provision. As stated in paragraph 17 of the Secretary-General's report, in recent years the closing date has been the Monday before the opening of the next session. Were the General Assembly to retain this practice, the closing date would consistently fall on an official holiday of the Organization, for which financial and other implications may need to be considered. Paragraph 17 of that report further states that the General Assembly may wish to decide on a closing date for future sessions that will fall on a working day.

In paragraph 46, the General Committee, noting the ad hoc decisions that had to be taken by the

General Assembly concerning the opening and/or closing dates of the fifty-second, fifty-third, fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions, recommends to the Assembly that it address, during its fifty-fifth session, the question of the opening and closing dates of future regular sessions with a view to deciding on a formula to determine the opening and closing dates of future regular sessions.

In paragraph 47, the General Committee, taking into account the opening date of the regular sessions, also recommends to the Assembly a review of the question of the mandatory deadline for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions having programme budget implications.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 45 and approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 46 and 47?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to section IV of the report of the General Committee, relating to the adoption of the agenda. It starts at paragraph 48.

I would first recall rule 23 of the rules of procedure, which provides that:

> "Debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda, when that item has been recommended for inclusion by the General Committee, shall be limited to three speakers in favour of, and three against, the inclusion".

I should like to stress that at this time we are not discussing the substance of any item.

With regard to paragraph 49, may I consider that it is the wish of the Assembly to direct its Main Committees to review their agendas with a view to streamlining their programme of work, as suggested in that paragraph?

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: Again, may I urge members of the Assembly to give careful thought to the suggestion by the Secretary-General, taking into account especially paragraphs 23 to 26 of the annex to resolution 51/241, to consider deferring to a later session items for which decisions or action are not required at the present session.

In paragraph 51, the General Committee recommends that the consideration of item 59 of the draft agenda, "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte", should be deferred to the fifty-sixth session and that the item should be included in the provisional agenda of that session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 52, the General Committee recommends that the consideration of item 93 of the draft agenda, "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India", should be deferred to the fifty-sixth session and that the item should be included in the provisional agenda of that session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 53, in connection with items 171, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181 and 187 of the draft agenda, the General Committee recommends the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of one single item, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations".

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 54, in connection with item 172 of the draft agenda, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 55, in connection with item 173 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the Inter-American Development Bank in the General Assembly", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 56, in connection with item 182 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in the General Assembly", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In respect of paragraph 57, the General Committee decided not to recommend the inclusion of item 183.

In paragraph 58, in connection with item 184 of the draft agenda, "Towards global partnerships", in paragraph 15 of document A/55/250, the item number referred to should read "184". A corrigendum to the document will be distributed. The General Committee recommends the inclusion of this item in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 59, the General Committee recommends that item 185 of the draft agenda, "World drug problem", be deleted from the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 60, in connection with item 186 of the draft agenda, "The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 61, in connection with item 188 of the draft agenda, "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict", the General Committee recommends the inclusion of this item in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 62, in connection with item 189 of the draft agenda, "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the agenda which the General Committee recommends for adoption by the General Assembly.

In accordance with past practice, we shall follow the numbering given in paragraph 63 of the General Committee's report (document A/55/250) and, where it seems appropriate, we shall consider items in groups. I should like to remind members once again that, at present, we are not discussing the substance of any item, except when such discussion can assist the Assembly in deciding whether or not to include an item in the agenda.

Items 1 to 6 have already been dealt with.

We turn to items 7 to 50. May I remind delegations that we are dealing only with the question of the inclusion of the items. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that items 51 to 64 are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: I now invite members to turn to items 65 to 81, relating to disarmament. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we turn to items 82 to 91. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we come to items 92 to 102, relating to international economic issues. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Items 103 to 114 relate to social and humanitarian questions. May I take it that these items are also to be included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, may I take it that items 115 to 153, dealing with administrative and financial questions, are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to items 154 to 165. If there is no objection, I will take it that these items are included in the agenda.

It was so decided.

The President: We next turn to items 166 to 168. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly has already decided to include items 169 to 176 in the agenda of the current session.

We now turn to items 177 to 179. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to section V of the report of the General Committee on allocation of items. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraph 64?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 67 to 71. We shall take up the recommendations one by one. Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers refer to the agenda in paragraph 63 of the report before us, namely, document A/55/250.

We turn first to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (a), which concerns item 10. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (b), relating to item 18. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (c), relating to item 49, entitled "The situation in East Timor during its transition to independence". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (d) concerning item 51. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In connection with paragraph 67 (e), relating to item 64, the General Committee recommends that the General Assembly allocate the item at an appropriate time during the session. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (f), relating to item 170, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (g), relating to item 173, entitled "Towards global partnerships". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (h), relating to item 174, entitled "The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (i), relating to item 175, entitled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the recommendation in paragraph 68, relating to item 73, entitled "General and complete disarmament". May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation pertaining to item 73?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the recommendation in paragraph 69 relating to item 107, entitled "Advancement of women". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We next turn to the recommendation in paragraph 70 (a), relating to item 169, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that the item should be allocated to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We next turn to the recommendation in paragraph 70 (b), relating to item 176, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that the item should be allocated to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the recommendation in paragraph 71 (a), relating to item 171, entitled "Observer status for the Inter-American Development Bank in the General Assembly". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that the item be allocated to the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 71 (b), relating to item 172, entitled "Observer status for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in the General Assembly". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that the item be allocated to the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee. As no member wishes to speak, I invite the Assembly to turn to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration in plenary meeting.

Taking into account the decisions we have just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items listed in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We now come to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items proposed for the First Committee in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We come now to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee.

May I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Second Committee in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items to the Third Committee, as proposed in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items to the Fifth Committee, as proposed in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we come to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for the Sixth Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Sixth Committee in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee. I wish to thank all the members of the Assembly for their kind cooperation at this meeting.

Each main Committee will receive the list of agenda items allocated to it so that it may begin and organize its work in accordance with rule 99 of the rules of procedure and paragraphs 30 and 31 of the annex to resolution 51/241.

In addition, kindly again note that the First Committee should complete its work by Friday, 3 November; the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) by Thursday, 9 November; the Third Committee by Friday 10 November; the Sixth Committee by Tuesday, 21 November; and the Second and Fifth Committees by Friday, 1 December 2000.

I hope that the Main Committees will continue the effort they demonstrated in the fifty-fourth session in concluding their work on time.

I wish to recall and underline that all meetings must start punctually at 10 a.m. and at 3 p.m., and I personally intend to ensure that we all keep to our commitment taken today. This undertaking also applies to the Secretariat, which must ensure that all documentation in all languages is available on time so that meetings can proceed without any delay.

I should now like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of Palestine, in its capacity as observer, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly. Members will recall resolution 52/250 of 7 July 1998 and its annex, as well as a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/1002 that outlines the Secretary-General's understanding of the implementation of the modalities annexed to the resolution.

I should like to draw the Assembly's attention in particular to paragraph 6 of the annex to resolution 52/250, which reads as follows:

> "The right to make interventions, with a precursory explanation or the recall of relevant General Assembly resolutions being made only once by the President of the General Assembly at the start of each session of the Assembly".

Accordingly, for the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the observer of Palestine will therefore participate in the work of the General Assembly in accordance with resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, resolution 43/177 of 15 December 1988 and resolution 52/250 of 7 July 1998, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention by Palestine in this session.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.